MAW
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LETTERS

FROM

A PARENT

ON THE

EDUCATION

OF

CHILDREN.

Train up a child in the way he ſhould go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it. PROV. xxii. 6.

"Delightful taſk, to rear the tender thought,
"And teach the young idea how to ſhoot.

THOMPSON.

SUNDERLAND:
PRINTED BY T. REED, HIGH-STREET.

LETTERS, &c.

Dear Sir,

I Know not how to arrange in a clearer manner, the remarks I have made at various times on the ſubject of Religious Education, than by giving you an artleſs relation of the circumſtances which occurred to produce them. When collected in this manner, if they appear to contain any thing worthy to be communicated to others, you are at perfect liberty to make them known, without the name of the Author.

I feel ſome reluctance in treating the ſubject as I have propoſed, becauſe it obliges me to trouble you with a part of my own hiſtory;—a ſubject, of all others, the moſt difficult. I do not think theſe remarks deſerving the attention of thoſe who have enjoyed the advantages of a liberal, religious education; yet as there are multitudes, who are deprived of ſuch privileges as they might eaſily attain, were chriſtian parents to attempt what is generally in their power, ſome obſervations, ſuited to ſuch parents, may be uſeful. They ſhould reflect, that numbers of children, even of religious parents, have been prevented from a conſiderable degree of uſefulneſs on earth, and conſequently, of happineſs in heaven, becauſe the opportunities have been loſt in which their capacities might have

been improved; partly from inattention, and partly from the incapacity of parents; but these were criminal, because they might have been avoided.

While these reflections impressed my mind with a sense of a parent's duty, it was natural to consider, that every conscientious person is bound to serve his generation;—that those labours are most important which promote Knowledge and Love;—and consequently, that he who promotes the instruction of youth, in subjects which affect their interests in both worlds, is certainly doing a very important part of his business on earth. Should these pages serve this valuable end, they will, indeed, be as bread cast upon the waters, to be found after many days. The little efforts I have made in the education of my own children, were suggested by the inconveniencies I had suffered from the want of proper attention to that object in my youth. I was placed in a situation similar, in point of instruction, to perhaps, the greatest part of the religious world. My father was a tradesman, possessed of but little property. He died when I was under two years of age. My mother procured the best instruction, the place we lived in, would admit of. I was taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and a smattering of Latin and French. At fourteen I was bound an apprentice, where I continued till I was twenty-one.

I had been early taught to reverence the Sabbath, pray in secret, and read the scriptures; but knew nothing of

of experimental religion, till I was about ſixteen: when it pleaſed GOD to give me ſome acquaintance with himſelf. This produced a thirſt after religious knowledge; and my leiſure hours were carefully employed in peruſing ſuch religious books as I could meet with; but the more I read,—the more I lamented my want of earlier and more general information. I found my judgement exceedingly uninformed in almoſt all thoſe ſubjects connected with either the Evidences or Doctrines of Revelation. I wiſhed to be uſeful to my fellow creatures; but want of information, made me afraid, in numerous inſtances, to ſpeak or act. I found that the time of my life, moſt favourable for obtaining inſtruction, had paſſed away, and I had learnt little to render me uſeful, either in the world, or the church.

When I afterwards had children capable of inſtruction, I more than ever lamented my defects. I knew they claimed my utmoſt attention. The ſanctification of their natures, belonged to God: He alone could make them wiſe to ſalvation; but it was a parent's duty TO INSTRUCT.

My difficulties in diſcharging this duty, were, in ſome reſpects, daily increaſing. A numerous and afflicted family, extenſive and important buſineſs, added to the defects in my own education, rendered the truſt committed to me more difficult. But GOD had given me a poſt I could not quit. I was a Parent, and therefore had no diſcharge from the parent's part. Remembering that the Seed-time,

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of infancy and youth, would never return to my offspring; that next to the ſalvation of my own ſoul, I had no greater buſineſs on earth than the care of my children;—that providing them with ſuſtenance, was not more neceſſary than procuring for them proper inſtructions;—that the want of food would but deſtroy their bodies;—but want of inſtruction might deſtroy their ſouls: I therefore earneſtly beſought the FATHER of Spirits to aſſiſt me;—and determined by his grace, I would leave nothing undone for their information, that was in my power.

Impreſſed with a ſenſe of the importance of a parent's charge, I was led to conſider, 1ſt, For what purpoſe inſtruction ſhould be given. 2nd, What ſort of inſtruction I had in my power to give. 3d. In what manner I could moſt effectually do this? The reſult of theſe enquiries I ſhall reſerve for the enſuing letters.

LETTER II.

ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

Dear Sir,

THE firſt enquiry made, was, "For what purpoſe ſhould Inſtruction be given?" I will give you my reflections on this, as they aroſe in my own breaſt. "Our children are born for two worlds. They, indeed, who think this world is all, have certainly fewer cares in the education

education of their offspring;—their motto is, "Let us eat, and drink, for to-morrow we die." They imagine, that they have nothing to do with God as the ſupreme Governor; nor with inviſible and eternal things, as their chief concern. They have no difficulties reſpecting revealed Truth, in any of its parts. The diſtinction between ſin and holineſs, is of little moment to them; nor, on their principles, do they need to be ſolicitous about the information of the mind; for, as it ſubſiſts for ſo very ſhort a period, it would be folly to enrich a caſket which muſt ſo ſoon periſh. I cannot forbear theſe reflections, when I conſider, for what purpoſe am I called to watch over my riſing offspring? Gracious God! what views ruſh in upon my mind! This infant, that is committed to my care, muſt exiſt in time and eternity! Who ſhall direct? Who ſhall aſſiſt me in the mighty taſk? To train up a Being for Eternity! An heir of God! A joint heir with Jeſus Chriſt! Should he be loſt thro' my ſloth and folly? Should he live, and grow, and die, in ignorance, guilt, and ſin, thro' my omiſſions? How! O! how ſhall I meet him in his final ſtate? Whatever I have to do for his welfare, in time, let me conſider,—"What means are moſt likely to benefit his immortal ſpirit? Where ſhall I find inſtruction ſuited to this purpoſe?" I cannot heſitate;—thy Word is my unerring Guide:—There I learn the way into the holieſt of all:—By the light of this Word, I am ſhewn, that the purpoſe for which thou haſt formed the children of men, is, to ſerve their generation,—to glorify thee on earth;—and to be forever with Thee in glory.

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This, then, is the chief End of Education,—that our children may be uſeful while they live, and happy when they die. Since this is the end that I ought to have in view, in the inſtruction of my children,—my next enquiry is,—What is that Inſtruction which ſhould be given them in order to promote this end? Certainly the great Truths contained in the Scriptures; particularly, thoſe reſpecting the accountableneſs and immortality, of man;—the Being and Perfections of God;—the ruin of human nature in Adam;—and the Redemption of the world by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe, with their immediate conſequences, are the leading ſubjects which ſhould early, uniformly, and perſeveringly, be inſtilled into the minds of my children. For if theſe ſacred truths have a place in the heart, they will ſurely bring forth fruit to eternal life. How then ſhall I ſow the ſeed? By what means ſhall I ſo convey theſe ſacred principles into their tender minds, that they may neither miſtake, nor forget them? How ſhall their memories be ſufficiently ſtored, and yet not oppreſſed? Again: What time ſhall I appropriate to this employ? As my children are yet young, the labour is leſs than it may be at a future period, when their underſtandings ſhall be more capable of receiving the reaſon of what is taught them. At preſent, the opportunities I have with them, are chiefly from ſeven till eight in the morning; two hours on a Saturday forenoon; and ſome hours on the Sabbath-day. This time, however, is not employed by me, entirely on religious ſubjects; but includes all the opportunities I have with them for every topic.

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We generally take the ſubjects they are learning in rotation, ſo that, by appropriating the Sabbath entirely to religious inſtruction, they have uſually three times in a week to converſe with me on matters of religion. My next enquiry was, In what manner ſhould the time be employed? A recital of particulars will anſwer this queſtion. At the period alluded to, the religious ſubjects they were taught, were few and obvious; treating chiefly of the Nature and Perfections of God;—his Laws;—the Fall of Man;—the Perſon and Mediation of Chriſt;—the Puniſhment of the wicked;—the Bleſſedneſs of Heaven. Theſe were daily taught them. Texts of Scripture and Children's Hymns were committed to memory for that purpoſe. Their firſt employ after breakfaſt was to get by heart, one or two texts of ſcripture, with a verſe or more of a ſuitable hymn, which was repeated to me that morning in courſe. They daily read ſhort leſſons in the New and Old Teſtament. I have thus, Sir, given you an account of the firſt attempts I made in the religious inſtruction of my children. If I do not exhauſt your patience, I will proceed to inform you of the progreſs made in this branch of their inſtruction for ſeveral years, ſo as to compriſe the method purſued, till they arrived to about the age of thirteen, and then to mention the other branches of education as they occurred; but I thought it preferable to cloſe my remarks on religion, before I began the other. I will not apologize for adding to this Letter ſome remarks which were made by me, on the plan I had purſued, at the time my eldeſt boy was about eight, and my ſecond about ſix years of age; they were

as follow: "I have to rejoice that the underſtandings of my children appear to improve in divine things;— they diſcern ſomething of the nature of Good and Evil;—there appears a degree of the fear of God in them;—they not only abhor lying, prophane words, &c.; but ſometimes reprove ſuch of their play-fellows as they obſerve doing wrong. I begin to conclude, that I diſcern the good effects of the method I have taken for their information."

Such were my views after a ſhort trial. My next will inform you of the enlarged endeavours I made for their improvement in religious knowledge.

I am, dear Sir, your's, &c.

LETTER III.

ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

Dear Sir,

AS the huſbandman watches the riſing blade, and rejoices in the genial ſhowers of ſpring; ſo will pious parents carefully inſpect the openings of ſacred Truth, in the underſtandings and affections of their children. We frequently expect too little from God; and perhaps, our defect is ſeldom more manifeſt, than in the expectations we have for our offspring. When the huſbandman caſts in the ſeed, and covers it with the earth, he has no doubt of the deſcending ſhowers, and the vital influences of the ſun;—

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but how often do devout parents plentifully ſow the ſeed of divine Truth,—water it with their prayers and tears,—yea, and frequently ſee ſhowers of divine influence deſcending upon the affections of their offſpring, and yet neglect to look for the growth of the ſeed. They *deſire*, rather than *expect*, that Truth ſhould ſpring out of the earth, and righteouſneſs look down from heaven. I am ſure I have much to lament on this account. Yet there was one method, in this branch of religious education, which, from its importance, I judged it my duty, and my privilege to adopt; and which I more particularly mention here, becauſe I have not obſerved it attended to elſewhere. I will explain and exemplify what I allude to, viz. To preſerve in writing, remarks on the progreſs which my children appeared to make in their acquaintance with ſacred things: By this means, I had an opportunity, not only of obſerving their progreſs in knowledge, but of reviewing the particular ſubjects which had made the greateſt impreſſion on their minds, and alſo keeping in remembrance the ſeaſons in which divine grace appeared to influence them; yet as I think ſuch a method important, I will annex a few of the memorandums preſerved in this manner.

March 13. I purpoſe giving my eldeſt ſon a blank book and will encourage him to make memorandums of what he can recollect of the ſermons he has heard. June 5th. I had ſome very profitable converſation with my ſon lately; his mind ſeems to open to divine things: I have reaſon to believe that he is drawn to ſecret prayer. June 26th. I

find, in repeated inſtances, he can give a tolerable account of the heads of a diſcourſe. He has this day very perfectly recited the leading parts of three ſermons which he had heard, and diſcovers ſome information upon the ſubjects he hears: For inſtance, he has aſked, "How would you expect—Iſaiah lv. 1,—to be treated,—if a ſermon was to be preached from that text?" He replied,—"the waters I underſtand, are the bleſſings of the Goſpel:—It would certainly be proper to ſhew,—1. "What theſe bleſſings are; 2dly, Who thirſt for them?" Imperfect as theſe thoughts are, they manifeſt ſome acquaintance with the ſacred Word. I had, at different parts of this day, much ſerious converſation with him, in which I found great freedom and pleaſure, in ſhewing him, how God anſwered prayer, and gave peace to the conſcience.

July 3d. He gave me ſome account of what he had read and heard. On being aſked, "If he recollected any particular part in which he found his mind affected?" He replied,—"In reading how Beveridge *lived*, I thought, if I neglected to live holy, I could not be ſaved."

Sept. 3d. In a converſation with my ſon this day, I had the pleaſure of obſerving, that his mind was opened to underſtand how chriſtian ſelf-denial, was a mean of promoting true happineſs. It was obſerved,—"Animals "have a pleaſure in motion; and young animals appear "to be in a ſtate of happineſs when in their gambols:— "Thus, all who place their chief good in dancing, racing, "hunting,

" hunting, &c. are little ſuperior to them." He was then aſked, " Wherein the bliſs of angels conſiſted?" To which he replied, " In their goodneſs, and enjoying a ſenſe of their Maker's favour;" From hence it was inferred, he might learn, that thoſe who denied themſelves every animal gratification which offended God, certainly promoted their own happineſs.

Nov. 3d. The following converſation took place this day which gives me hopes that my ſon's underſtanding is conſiderably enlightened, and his mind, in ſome degree, awakened to a ſenſe of divine things. Queſtion. Do you know that, as the human nature was defiled in conſequence of the original tranſgreſſion, no perſon can enter heaven unleſs a change takes place in his heart? Anſwer. I clearly underſtand that. Q. If you underſtand this,—have you reaſon to think, that ſuch a change, as prepares you for heaven, has already paſſed in your heart? A. No: I do not think there has. Q. Why do you ſuppoſe it has not? A. Becauſe, I think, if it had, I ſhould love better to read God's word. Q. I obſerve that you always kneel down night and morning;—Do you always ſay the ſame words? A. No: I do not. Q. What do you ſay? A. I aſk God to ſave my ſoul, as well as I can.

January 1. My children both wept, while we were reading and converſing about the deſtruction of ungodly men. My heart yearned over them. I found ſtrong deſires that God would preſerve them at ſchool, from the corruptions and temptations to which they there would be expoſed.

I adviſed my eldeſt, to pray for direction,—to beware of evil example;—to be willing to be ridiculed for his regard to religion;—to reaſon with thoſe who might oppoſe him. He anſwered, He was called the preacher, &c. &c.

June 26. My eldeſt ſon aſſures me,—" That he finds ſome pleaſure in prayer;—does not confine himſelf to a form;—but endeavours to ſpeak to God, as to his Father, in Chriſt Jeſus;—that he has felt ſome pleaſure in ſeeking a bleſſing on his learning, and in praying for his father;—that when he thinks upon death, judgment and eternity, he hopes the Lord will be gracious to him, not becauſe he has never done wrong, but becauſe of his mercy in Chriſt Jeſus;—and that the Lord has given him a ſincere deſire to do his Will. May the bruiſed reed never be broken! The ſmoking flax never be quenched! Oct. 7th. I have not lately remarked the converſations I have had with my ſon; but what paſſed this morning, I wiſh to preſerve, juſt as it occurred.

Father. Did you underſtand the reaſon why I was ſo much diſpleaſed with you laſt night.

Son. No, I did not.

F. I will now tell you. I have lately thought I ſaw ſome appearances in your diſpoſition which were unpromiſſing, and laſt night I took that method to diſcover them to you:—But, will you tell me, what it is that makes ſatan oppoſe God?

S. He is deſirous of doing his own will, and unwilling

ling to ſubmit to the will of God.

F. You have ſaid right;—and becauſe he cannot do his own will, he is filled with enmity and rage againſt God and his works: Hence, he is continually tormented with pride, wrath, and malice. But why are holy angels and ſaints in heaven, free from theſe tormenting paſſions?

S. Becauſe they ſubmit to the will of God.

F. Obſerve, my dear, that when ſin entered into the world, the human nature ſunk into a degree of that Self-will, which prevails in hell. Hence, wicked men are ſaid to be haters of God;—and the carnal mind is enmity againſt him. Now, nothing but the ſanctifying grace of God, can deliver us from this enmity: But education, inſtruction, and reproof, are means which parents ſhould uſe with their children, in order to promote the ſanctification of their nature. In ſpring and ſummer, when you are walking in the garden, whether do you think it beſt to let the walks and beds be over-run with weeds, or diligently to pull them up as ſoon as they appear?

S. Certainly, as ſoon as they appear.

F. Keep this in view;—and obſerve that your father has endeavoured to act in this manner. In general, he ſees you very affectionate and obedient;—he believes, it is your great endeavour to ſhew your love to him:—But he knows, that you partake of a corrupt nature;—that you bear about you that Self-will, which is enmity to God: The preventing grace of God has hitherto greatly reſtrained it: Yet there are ſome circumſtances which ſhew, that it is in you, and render it my duty to make you ſenſible of it.

Tho'

Tho' the inſtances are few, and not very ſtriking, yet like tender weeds in the flower beds, they ſhould not be ſuffered to grow. Are not you yourſelf conſcious, that in ſome caſes in which you do not get your own will,—you behave with coldneſs, if not rudeneſs, to thoſe around you?

S. I am really ſenſible of this.

F. I have thought, that even to myſelf, tho' it was in a very ſlight degree, there has been in ſome particular inſtances, a want of reſpect. What paſſed yeſterday, had an appearance of this, and led me to act as I did, in order to ſhew you the root from whence ſuch tempers ſpring. But there is another ſubject I would enquire of you about. Have you, (in private,) read your Bible this week?

S. I have not ſince Sabbath-day.

F. Have you not neglected it, contrary to your own judgment?

S. Indeed, I have.

F. If your reflections upon this ſubject were put into language, would they not be ſomething of this ſort? 1. I have an indulgent parent, who often entreats me to ſpend a few moments in private, each day, in reading the ſcriptures with regularity. Tho' I love him much, and would not willingly offend him, yet I neglect this. 2. I have no reaſon to expect the ſalvation of my ſoul, while I neglect ſearching the book of God; yet I do neglect it. 3. I am convinced, that ſatan will do all he can, to prevent me from peruſing this book;—yet I yield to his ſuggeſtions. 4. God has written this word for my inſtruction, he commands me to ſearch it;—when I do not: I know I ſlight both his Goodneſs and his Power;—yet I neglect

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to ſearch this word. Do not ſuch reflections as theſe ſometimes ariſe?

S. They do.

F. Let me aſk you another queſtion,—Do you know what a Teſtament is?

S. I underſtand it to be a Will.

F. Whoſe Will is contained in the Goſpels?

S. The Will of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

F. When is a Will put in force?

S. After the death of the perſon who made it.

F. Does his Will leave any benefits for you?

S. I underſtand, it entitles me to eternal ſalvation.

F. Were your father to bequeathe to you a vaſt eſtate,—What would be thought of you,—if you ſhould never look over his Will, and claim your privilege?

S. I ſhould juſtly be thought very fooliſh, and very ungrateful.

F. I have been telling you, that you have in you a high degree of Self-will, which is ſinful. You cannot change your own nature;—but your Saviour's Will, not only gives you a right to eternal ſalvation, (upon your believing in him,) but contains alſo promiſes that relate to a deliverance from this unholy nature which troubles you: Such as theſe; "I will take away the heart of ſtone, and give an heart of fleſh;—I will write my laws upon their hearts, and put them in their minds." Theſe promiſes you want fulfilled in you;—but remember, you only can expect the accompliſhment of them in God's own way. Tho' you

pray in ſecret, yet if you neglect to ſearch the ſcriptures, you cannot expect the fulfilment of the promiſes. I adviſe you to retire;—take pen, ink, and paper;—write down, as well as you can, the converſation we have had this morning;—and plead with God to bleſs it to you.

About an hour afterwards, I went into his room;—he threw his arms around me, and wept aloud.

F. Has God, indeed broke your heart?

S. He has, indeed, Father.

F. Do you now deſire to be wholly his?

S. I do deſire to be his.

I found he had been writing;—and his own reflections had crowded upon him ſo powerfully, for his neglect, that he had ſunk into great diſtreſs, and ſolemnly promiſed the Lord, that he would no longer neglect his word. We ſpent ſome time in ſolemn prayer.

By ſuch remarks as theſe, I was enabled to preſerve a ſtrong recollection of the particular ſeaſons in which my children's minds were affected with ſacred things. But as impreſſions on an unenlightened judgment, are eaſily effaced; as ſoon, therefore, as they were capable, a proper Catechiſm was regularly taught them on the Sabbath.

Your's, &c.

FROM

FROM THE FATHER TO HIS SON.

My dear Boy,

I Know not that you will fully underſtand every thing in this Letter;—but I wiſh you to read it when alone; and lift up your heart to your FATHER, "who ſeeth in ſecret."—that he may make it a bleſſing. May he bleſs you with the ſame emotions which led me to take up my pen. What ſacred joy do I feel from a pleaſing hope that you ſhall one day meet me in the kingdom of glory.

This world is one vaſt wilderneſs. It is ſaid in Job, "The ſinner travelleth in pain all his days." Reſtleſs cares, unholy deſires, ſecret miſgivings, inward horror and deſpair, prey upon the ſpirits of thoſe who are living without God in the world: They have no peace, but are like the troubled ſea: Deſtruction and miſery are in their ways: the way of peace they have not known. But "Light is ſown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart." When we are made new creatures, we have peace with God thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;—Redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveneſs of our ſins; the world wears a new face; every creature of God is ſanctified, and received with thankſgiving. I wiſh to tell you, (and I hope God will give you the experience of it,) that there is more ſolid happineſs in the conſolations which his Spirit imparts to thoſe, who, with broken contrite hearts, ſeek his face,—in one moment, than in an age of pleaſurable ſin.

My greateſt wiſh for you is, to ſee you *happy*. God is my witneſs how oft I plead for it. I rejoice that happineſs is *his gift*. If you enquire,—What is it? I anſwer, "It is to feel his love ſhed abroad in your heart." Could I ſee you as wiſe, rich, and powerful as Solomon,—yet deſtitute of the love of God, you would only be wretched.

I write to you while I feel this ſacred flame, that you may preſerve this in your memory and plead with God that he would make you a partaker of it. What comfort would it give me, to ſee you happy in the favour of God! I feel a pleaſing hope that he will mark you for his own;—that he will draw you to himſelf;—that you will ſoon learn,—"His ways are ways of pleaſantneſs and his paths are peace." Be frequently alone. Speak to God as to a gracious father: Tell him every deſire of your heart. Read his word. Value his Sabbaths. Read good Mr. B's. life frequently on the Sabbath. You have the conſtant prayers of your affectionate father.

LETTER II.

YOUR laſt gave me pleaſure, becauſe I thought I could diſcern a very great improvement in your writing. It is my prayer to God, that you may daily grow wiſer and better, and I truſt you will loſe no means of improvement; but remember, that "It is God that giveth the increaſe." I wiſh, my dear boy, may ſoon, very ſoon,—learn that "without him he can do nothing." A deep

conviction

conviction of this, is that—*poverty of ſpirit*, to which is promiſed,—" the kingdom of heaven." You know the poor *are deſtitute*; they are ready to receive: Thus it is in ſacred things.—Thoſe who do not know their ignorance, will not apply to Jeſus Chriſt for inſtruction: Thoſe who ſuppoſe they can make themſelves wiſe, good and happy, will not beg of him to do it for them; but the " poor in ſpirit," who know that they are " miſerable, blind, naked;" and " utterly without ſtrength" they will mourn and pray for ſalvation. Surely ſuch will be amongſt the hungry, who are " filled with good things;"—whilſt thoſe who do not know their wants, will be amongſt the rich that are ſent empty away.—I have not time to add more: but am your affectionate father.

LETTER III.

My very dear Boy,

YOUR'S, received this day, gave me heart-felt pleaſure, as I believe you do not make greater profeſſions of duty and affection than what are genuine. I have long thought that you are ſo far above, what St. Paul calls,—" the ſpirit of the world," as to make no profeſſions without a real deſign to fulfil them;—that you are ſolicitous " to have your converſation with *ſimplicity* and *godly ſincerity*;—remembering, that for every *idle*, much more every *untrue* word, we muſt give an account. I have frequently rejoiced, that the grace of God has made your conſcience ſo tender, that you are ſcrupulouſly cautious, not to *miſrepreſent* ſubjects, and there-

by

by *miſlead* others; whilſt you are prudent enough, not to put yourſelf into the power of deſigning perſons, by unneceſſarily expoſing what they have no right to know.

You deſired me to write you a long letter. You ſee, by this, I am encouraging you to *reflect*, as you write, eſpecially to your father. I was not only pleaſed with your letter, becauſe of the affection which you avow for me, but becauſe you write to me with the reſpect and confidence, I wiſh you to do. Your affection I never diſputed, and the manner in which you conduct yourſelf, convinces me, that it is guarded with due reſpect. I am alſo pleaſed with the correctneſs of your letter. I purpoſe enclofing you an abſtract from Sulley's Memoirs, by which you will ſee how that great man ſpent his time.—I ſend it to ſhew you, that if you deſire to be beneficial to your fellow creatures, you muſt uſe great diligence. Conſidering the pains which have been taken with you, I hope, very ſoon, to find you at the head of each claſs you are put into: I have little doubt of this, if you apply yourſelf cloſely. I expect that you will ſoon convince your teachers, that you thoroughly *underſtand* what you learn: If ſo, they will put you forward. You inform me, that you read from ſix, till eight, in the evening after ſchool hours: If ſo, you ought, for your healths' ſake, to be without doors, at ſome exerciſe at noon. Your manner of ſpending your vacant hours, on Thurſdays and Saturdays, I highly approve. Tell me how you ſpend your Sabbaths? Have you any very ſerious thoughts? Do you go to God in prayer, as to your heavenly Father? Do you

you read his word? Do you meditate upon it? Do you avoid hurtful converſation?—I am your affectionate father.

LETTER IV.

My beloved Boy,

I Often think of you in my beſt hours. O! what conſolation will it give me, to know that you have that bleſſed ſpirit which dwelt in good Mr. Barret, and Mr. Matthew Henry, when they were very little older than yourſelf! How did they ſpend their Sabbaths,—in examining the ſtate of their hearts before God! In ſecret prayer! In meditating upon the ſcriptures, and ſacred things they read and heard!

How ſhall I mourn, if you return from ſchool leſs ſerious than you went, and leſs diſpoſed for ſacred and uſeful employments. But I truſt, God will preſerve you. I have juſt been thinking upon ſome of the opportunities in which you accompanied me to viſit the poor and afflicted, and at our family devotion;—in which ſeaſons, I have found great pleaſure in committing you, and your dear brother, to God, to inſtruct and ſave you. Do you ever recollect thoſe times, when your mind was affected with the kindneſs of the Lord to you;—when you were all attention to the ſacred truths you heard;—all deſire to be wiſer and better;—to be, what the Lord would have you to be? Do you feel theſe deſires *now?* Do you, in your ſecret walks, meditate upon the ſpecial goodneſs of God

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God to you, in giving you kind friends, and ſo many mercies? Do you, above all, plead with God, that his great mercy in giving his Son for you, may not be in vain? Do you read thoſe pious books, I recommended to you?——I am your affectionate father.

LETTER V.

My dear Boy,

YOU will, no doubt, be ſurpriſed and ſorry that I left home before I came to ſee you; but as it was moſt convenient to myſelf to do ſo, I am confident you will think that a ſufficient reaſon. I do not forget daily, to entreat your heavenly Father, that you may be preſerved from evil;—that no day,—no inſtruction may be loſt to you;—that you may, in ſome degree, reſemble him, who increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and was in favour with God and man. Tho' the huſbandman were to plough his ground and ſow his ſeed with the utmoſt diligence, what would he do, were no rain to deſcend, no ſun to ſhine? I have endeavoured to do the beſt I could for you; and it is my joy, that I can commit you to him who heareth prayer. Do not, my love, do not ceaſe to pray for yourſelf; and ſhall I ſay, do not forget to pray for your father, that if the Lord will, he may be preſerved to you, that a bleſſing may attend what he has in hand;—that as you grow up to manhood, you may aſſiſt your father, not merely in accumulating money; but in conſidering how we may moſt properly uſe what we have;—not in fooliſh and hurtful expences, but in being "eyes to the blind; feet to the lame;

and

and in making the widow's heart ſing for joy." It will be the greateſt joy, I can have, next to the divine favour, to ſee you and your brother, happy in God; humbly and zealouſly endeavouring to employ your time, your underſtanding, your education, your all, in doing his will, and promoting the holineſs and happineſs of all around you.

You remember, when Solomon came to the throne, God ſaid to him, "Aſk what I ſhall give the." Do you recollect his anſwer? Was it riches? Was it power? Was it the necks of his enemies? No. Solomon's heart was enlarged with love to God and his fellow creatures. I would have you think ſeriouſly upon his anſwer, (ſee 2. Chron. i. 7 and 12.) What a noble mind! Did he ſuffer by being ſo unconcerned for his own eaſe, his own honour, his own intereſt; by having the good of others ſo much at heart? No. He got every thing,—"Becauſe," ſaith God, "this was in thine heart;"—this love to others,—this concern for my glory;—"and thou haſt not aſked riches, wealth, nor honour, nor the life of thine enemies,—neither yet haſt aſked long life; but haſt aſked wiſdom and knowledge for thyſelf, that thou mayeſt judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: Wiſdom, and knowledge is granted unto thee, and I will give thee *riches*, and *wealth*, and *honour*, ſuch as none of the kings have had before thee." Tell me, what paſſage in the New Teſtament bears a meaning ſimilar to this; as you may by ſuch means increaſe your acquaintance with the ſcriptures.

As I conjecture you have nearly finiſhed the abſtracting the book I ſent you upon the Evidences of the Truth of Scripture, I wiſh you to ſend me, the firſt convenient opportunity, a ſhort ſketch of the five books of Moſes, an account of the principal events in each. That the Lord may abundantly bleſs you, prays your affectionate Father.

LETTER VI.

My dear Boy,

I Never would ſend you a Letter, but what is likely to be of laſting uſe to you; and I frequently write much to you, becauſe I have a great pleaſure in communicating thoſe ſentiments, which I wiſh to ſee forming in your mind, as you riſe to maturity. As I am ſolicitous that you ſhould have all poſſible acquaintance with the ſcriptures, I ſometimes deſire your ſentiments in writing, on particular ſubjects contained in them. But while I do this, I ſhould be ſorry to oppreſs your mind, or that you ſhould do any thing *as a taſk*. I hope many ſubjects are already ſo far committed to memory, that they cannot eaſily be effaced.

I write thus, that you may fully underſtand me, and not imagine that when I propoſe any ſubject for your enquiry, your father has given you a taſk, which, if you do not execute, he will be ſevere with you. No, my love: Hitherto I have been ſo ſatisfied with your deſire to pleaſe me, that, unleſs it has been in ſome very rare inſtances, I have been convinced you had a pleaſure, not only in complying with,

with, but in diſcovering whatever would be agreeable to me. I hope God will increaſe this diſpoſition in you, and that in every future year of your life, which I am permitted to ſee, I ſhall find you requiring leſs of a parent's authority, and more of his confidence and affection. Whenever I deſired you to ſend me extracts from books, my deſign was *to lead you to reflect*. A ſubject has occurred to me this morning, which you can conſider, and anſwer in your next. I wiſh you to take your Bible, and, beginning at the firſt chapter of Geneſis, to give me the beſt liſt you can draw out from the Old and New Teſtament, of the Names and employments of good Men, which will prove, that they were diligent in buſineſs, as well as fervent in ſpirit. For inſtance, you may begin with Adam, whoſe occupation was to till the ground;—Abel kept a flock;—Noah built an Ark, &c. &c. You will confine yourſelf to thoſe good men, whoſe characters are the moſt remarkable.

I am, your affectionate Father.

LETTER VII.

My very dear Boy,

YOU aſk me to pray for you. I do my love, daily intreat the God and Father of the ſpirits of all fleſh, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to bleſs you with the knowledge of himſelf;—then you will be wiſe, good, and happy. Remember, my dear lad, (and may the Lord himſelf write it upon your heart,) *that you are a ſpirit born for eternity*;—that you dwell a few years in a tabernacle of

clay, a body of duſt, and muſt then return to God. I adviſe you to read frequently in *Baxter's Saint's Reſt*, and ſuch books as ſhew the importance of ſalvation. You may mark with your pencil or pen, ſome of thoſe parts that ſtrongly deſcribe the immortality and worth of the ſoul, and employ a part of your Sabbaths, occaſionally, in tranſcribing them. I recollect, that before I was of your age, God gave me, at ſeaſons, ſuch deep convictions of the value of my ſoul, as led me to plead earneſtly with him, that whatever it ſhould coſt me,—nothing might prevent me from the attainment of eternal ſalvation. Who can tell what it will be, to be HAPPY OR MISERABLE FOR EVER! Yet this muſt be your caſe;—you muſt join the ſongs of angels, or lamentions of the loſt,—to all eternity.

Look, in your walks, and frequently ſay,—"Could I "number all the blades of graſs,—all the leaves of the "trees—all the drops of dew,—all the ſtars of heaven,— "and the duſt of the earth,—they would bear no propor- "tion to the ages of my eternal exiſtence." Let this lead you to frequent prayer, and remember, that God ſo loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that ſinners, the chief of ſinners, who ſeek his face, and believe in him, might not periſh, but have everlaſting life. Be aſſured of this, that Jeſus Chriſt came to ſave you, from an eternity of ſorrow, and give you, an eternity of joy. Often in your ſolitary hours, eſpecially when your mind is affected with theſe things, pour out your ſoul to your Father who ſeeth in ſecret; and plead that paſſage in Matt. vii. 7,—

10. Indeed, my love, I ſhall have little doubt of your converſion and ſalvation, if once you earneſtly begin to ſeek the Lord for yourſelf. Be not afraid to feel,—that your heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked. You muſt, in ſome degree, feel this, before you will experimentally know the worth of Jeſus Chriſt.

They that are whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick. Till we feel the plague of our hearts, we ſhall not ſet a proper value on Him, who was manifeſted in the fleſh, to deſtroy the works of the devil. I have not opportunity at preſent to add more, than that,

I am, your affectionate Father.

LETTER VIII.

My dear Lad,

I Have juſt now read your very affectionate letter. You ſay the place is now empty to you:—"*Now you have no couſin, no father, no brother.*" You have, my love, a Father who is ever preſent with you;—who can fill that emptineſs of mind which you feel. Go, my beloved boy, when your ſoul feels a want of earthly friends, go in ſecret walks of meditation and prayer, and tell your heavenly Father the deſires you feel; aſk him to give you that peace which paſſeth underſtanding, to fill you with the ſpirit of prayer; then you will know what it is to have ſupport, tho' deprived of the preſence of your father, brother, and every kind friend.

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learned from the religion of JESUS CHRIST, to regard their welfare in this, as well as a future world; yea, that there was a close connection between storing their minds with useful knowledge of the things of time, and promoting their happiness in a future state; because every blessing of time, properly used, will certainly meet with its reward in heaven. By improving the talents of our children, we increase their opportunities of usefulness; and consequently, it will be their own fault, if their future bliss be not increased in proportion. Hence those parents who are truly crucified to the world, may safely use every lawful means in their power, to promote the welfare of their offspring. They, therefore, ought to attempt such a method of education, as may give their children a probability of general usefulness, while, at the same time, they teach them to sit in the lowest place. Sentiments of this kind led me to enquire,—What sort of Instruction it was in my power to communicate, that would give my children the greatest opportunities of being useful in life? I thought, they are preparing for a dangerous voyage;—the rudiments of education are the stores which they will need on their passage:—It is impossible to determine what they will meet with;—but it is my duty to provide them with necessaries for every possible hazard.

I had little doubt of their attaining what is taught in common schools; but it was an enquiry of some moment,—How a foundation might be laid for more general KNOWLEDGE, of those subjects which concern us as members of civil society, distinguished from the particular branches of instruction, which merely affect our peculiar profession or occupation

occupation in life. It is one thing to have a well-informed mind; another, to be proficients in our particular calling. We may be the latter, and yet remain comparatively barbarians. Nevertheleſs, if there be a ſound judgment, there will be a readineſs to cultivate that which is moſt important to ourſelves. Trace this ſentiment to its largeſt extent, and it diſcovers the pre-eminence of the enlightened ſtateſman, over the dark and rude ſavage: The latter can form his canoe, or hurl his dart, with much greater dexterity than the former; but his ſuperior information enables him to graſp the deſigns, and affect the intereſts of millions. Hence, to cultivate a knowledge of human nature, muſt be conſidered as an important deſign of education; becauſe, he that knows little of the heart, muſt be proportionably unfit for the influencing of others; whilſt he, who is beſt acquainted with the ſprings of human action, and at the ſame time knows how to direct theſe to their beſt end, will be moſt calculated to ſucceed in his attempts to do good.

The queſtion that aroſe from theſe reflections, was,—How ſhall I begin, in early life, to fix thoſe principles which will produce ſuch effects? What ſort of information will moſt effectually direct the judgment, and at the ſame time, ſtimulate to a proper imitation of the wiſe and good? How ſhall induſtry and benevolence be excited, by all that my children may be taught? How ſhall they acquire a thorough knowledge of mankind, without ſuffering from the contagion of evil example? How ſhall they be made ſolicitous to uſe all their powers for great and good pur-

poſes? How ſhall I convince them, that no ſituation in life is too inſigniſicant, for us to attempt being univerſal bleſſings, to all we are connected with? How may they riſe above all the diſcouragements of their ſituation, ſo as to uſe all their talents to the beſt of purpoſes? Nothing appeared ſo likely to call forth every generous ſentiment, and raiſe them above all the diſcouragements, which depreſs the minds of millions, as the fixing deeply on their minds what hath been done by others. Did I wiſh them to have a humbling view of the littleneſs of the moſt diſtinguiſhed men? To hide pride from them? Was I ſolicitous to fill them with ardent deſires for the happineſs of all around them, and to conceive of the human race, as of one blood with them, however divided by the diſtinctions of humanity? Did I wiſh them to ſee and conſider the over-ruling,—the over-guiding Hand, which ſuſtains and directs the whole? Was it the duty of a parent, in the education of his children, to provide for the nurture of the moſt pious and benevolent diſpoſitions in their minds? What means might be uſed for this purpoſe?

Theſe reflections almoſt anticipate an explanation of the method which appeared calculated to anſwer my ends. Could I cultivate in my charge, a taſte for Hiſtory and Biography, theſe ſubjects in preference to many others, appeared conducive to ſuch purpoſes. For however abuſed theſe ſciences have been, yet, if I miſtake not, to pious minds, few ſubjects, except thoſe immediately of a religious nature, have a greater tendency to promote humility, benevolence,

nevolence, and piety. The man whoſe heart is enlarged with LOVE TO GOD, neceſſarily feels an intereſt in the concerns of his fellow-creatures; hence ariſes a deſire to know the events which have taken place among men. The man whoſe heart glows with LOVE TO MEN, will naturally be ſtimulated to beneficent actions, by inſtances placed before him, of diſtinguiſhed zeal and induſtry. To provide for an acquaintance with hiſtory, and eminent characters, appeared to me of more conſequence, than that acquaintance with dead languages, which is uſually obtained in ſchools. Not that I ſuppoſe the one to be incompatible with the other; but rather, that boys who have ſome acquaintance with general hiſtory, will purſue the languages with greater avidity than others, becauſe their minds will be ſo much the more capable of underſtanding the ſubjects treated of by authors in the learned languages.

The particular method which was purſued to promote their acquaintance with hiſtory, I forbear mentioning at preſent, as it will connect with it ſeveral obſervations on ſome other ſubjects, which I hope to give you in the enſuing Letters.

LETTER XI.

Dear Sir,

MY laſt cloſed with an intimation that I hoped to give you ſome remarks on thoſe ſubjects which were connected with hiſtory, as an important branch of education. The

principal of theſe ſubjects were Geography and Chronology. If children, almoſt in a ſtate of infancy, are capable of acquiring the rudiments of the learned languages, there cannot be a doubt, but they are equally capable, at the ſame period, of attaining the rudiments of theſe ſciences. Hence, almoſt, at their firſt acquaintance with the uſe of words, my children were taught the general terms uſed in Geography, with the names of the principal cities in the world; and ſome ſteps were taken to give them an acquaintance with the outlines of chronological events. I have particularly noticed theſe ſubjects, becauſe they do not in general appear to be conſidered as of that importance which they really are in education: At the ſame time the uſual parts of inſtruction were not omitted. As my intention in communicating theſe lines to you, was not to lay down rules for the inſtruction of thoſe who have the advantages of a liberal education; but only to hint at what might be of ſervice to thoſe whoſe ſituation deprives them of ſuch helps; I have therefore little more than noticed, what was really done, and which, were it more generally practiſed, would probably have a conſiderable influence on the happineſs of a very numerous claſs of men. Perſons of fortune who can ſend their ſons to the beſt ſchools; and thoſe young men, who have opportunities of attending well-conducted academies, certainly have advantages very ſuperior to others. But there are many who have not theſe privileges, and whoſe parents are diſcouraged from attempting that improvement of their offspring, which is really practicable by them. Their diſcouragement ariſes principally from two cauſes;

cauſes; the one is, an apprehenſion that it would require a degree of time and application which they cannot command; the other is, that *no method* can be uſed which is preferable to the ordinary one of ſuffering children to get what they can at common ſchools, till they are old enough to go to buſineſs. Perhaps few perſons have tried how ſoon the human mind is capable of culture, and provided it be prudently watched over, how capacious it is of a great variety of ſubjects, without being overburdened.

Were conſcientious parents to do what in them lies, with regularity, diligence, and perſeverance; I do not ſee, but the children of ordinary tradeſmen, might have advantages in education which they are frequently deprived of. If, indeed, it be a fault to cultivate the minds of our offspring, thoſe parents who are moſt negligent, are moſt praiſe-worthy; but nature and religion both revolt at the thought, and plead more for the improvement of the minds of our children, than for the advancement of their fortune.

The attention that is paid to the inſtruction of boys in ordinary ſchools, will not be ſufficient for ſuch a variety of ſubjects, if parents do not ſecond it at home: And few perſons will do this to any purpoſe who do not ſeriouſly undertake it. Too many imagine, that they diſcharge their duty, merely by attempting to accumulate property for their families; and perſuade themſelves, that they have neither capacity nor opportunity for inſtructing their offspring; but would they be thought deſerving the name of parents, who ſhould neglect all means of providing for their children,

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and depend ſolely upon the exertions of others? Are parents the only perſons who are to avoid the labour of inſtructing youth? Did God deſign that this moſt important truſt, ſhould be delegated to thoſe who are actuated to the performance of it only by mercenary motives? Parents, ſurely, from numerous conſiderations, are the beſt tutors; and tho' they cannot, on many accounts, be the only ones, yet, perhaps, the caſes in which they are entirely prevented from ſuperintending their own charge, are very few.

Surely, nothing ſerves more ſtrongly to cheriſh filial affection, than the diſcharge of this part of our duty to our children: But by turning them entirely out to ſtrangers from their infancy, the firmeſt cements of ſociety, and richeſt ſources of domeſtic comfort, are often deſtroyed. For ſuch is the human mind, that as we perceive, and are aſſured of the love of others, we naturally eſteem and love them in proportion; and therefore, when the underſtandings of children ripen, tho' they diſcern their obligations to induſtrious and careful teachers;—yet, with how much greater and more laſting warmth of affection, do they contemplate the labours of parental love in their education? Were there no other argument in its favour, ſurely pious and affectionate parents, need no more to prompt them to devote ſome part of their time to ſuch purpoſes; nor would the ſacrifice be much, if time were taken from pleaſing company, or even from important buſineſs, for ſuch an employ. It may indeed be doubted, whether this be not one of the firſt and moſt important of occupations; eſpecially, as a very ſmall portion of time is ſufficient to ſuperintend a general plan of education,

education, with ſuch helps as are every where to be had. Difficult as this method may appear, I have found, from ſeveral years experience, that one hour in the day, has been ſufficient for the purpoſe. But as I have already given you ſome account of the time employed, in watching over my charge, I ſhall in my next proceed to give you ſome remarks under each particular head, on the method uſed to promote their information in each branch, and as I have already diſcuſſed the ſubject of Religion, I ſhall proceed to particularize ſome of the others: Meantime,

I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.

LETTER XII.

Dear Sir,

I Cannot with greater clearneſs preſent you with what I wiſh to do, than in the very manner in which it occurred. When my children were ſo far advanced in years, as to require a conſiderable degree of attention, it occurred to me, that they were ſurely entitled to as much, as any branch of buſineſs I was concerned in; and from this obvious conſideration, was I led to make the enſuing remark, which as it immediately leads to the whole ſubject, I will give you juſt as it ſtands:

" It is uſual for perſons of learning and buſineſs, to pre-
" ſerve *methodical* and *diſtinct* remarks upon every important
" ſubject which may be uſeful to them:—Conſidering how
" important the charge of education is, I cannot be too
" particular. I therefore purpoſe to keep diſtinct memo-

" randums

" randums upon the different branches of it, that I may " the more eaſily advert to them when neceſſary. I have " this morning opened a blank book, and at proper diſtan- " ces given titles, at the head of the leaves, to the various " ſubjects they are learning:—by occaſionally making " ſuch entries under each ſeparate article, I ſhall eaſily " ſee the progreſs they make, and the moſt likely means " to aſſiſt them; at the ſame time it will conſiderably " relieve my own mind, when I have to converſe with " them, and preſerve ſome method in the part I have to " take in their inſtruction."

By this artleſs expedient, I found a plan laid down to which I could continually advert; and which materially aſſiſted my labours. The ſubjects which my little ſyſtem embraced, were neither few, nor inſignificant; yet they were ſuch as every parent, who has any opportunity, ought to inſtruct his children in; yea, to uſe the beſt means in his power to render that inſtruction perfect. It will not be neceſſary to do more at preſent than give you a liſt of their names; and illuſtrate, in a few inſtances, the particulars under each general head, which will naturally lead to a cloſe of the ſubject. The contents of my little account were as follows.—

1. Remarks on Religious Inſtruction. 2. Grammar. 3. Geography. 4. Chronology. 5. Hiſtory. 6. Biography. 7. Arithmetic. 8. Extracts of Poetry. 9. Miſcellaneous Reading. 10. Latin. 11. French. 12. Behaviour. 13. Amuſements.

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It is ſcarcely neceſſary to notice ſeveral ſubjects, as they cannot eaſily differ from the uſual method of teaching. I will not therefore ſay any more on Grammar, Arithmetic, the Languages, and ſeveral others, than that the beſt books that I could procure were obtained,—the cloſeſt application at the time of teaching was enforced, and great pains were taken to explain the principles of whatever ſubject they were taught. I had ſome reaſon to ſuppoſe, that their acquaintance with grammar, eſpecially, was ſuperior to moſt of their years, and that the method uſed to teach this was ſucceſsful,—which was, not only to require them to commit the Rules to memory,—but they were ſo repeatedly examined, reſpecting the reaſon and deſign of theſe rules, that in many inſtances, where they could not repeat the words of the rule, they evidenced their underſtanding it by a rational explanation of its principle. A part of their time was regularly employed at home in reviewing what they had learned at ſchool, and ſome pains were taken to promote their acquaintance with the other ſubjects before mentioned.

The following is a tranſcript of the Memorandums made on the improvement in each branch:—HISTORY. Having prepared my eldeſt ſon for reading hiſtory by an acquaintance with the outlines of geography and chronology, the firſt attempt was to make him acquainted with a ſhort, but comprehenſive abſtract of Univerſal Hiſtory. This he has ſo much knowledge of, that he can, with ſome propriety anſwer, the following queſtions:

1. What was the firſt kingdom we have an authentic

account of?

2. What others roſe in ſucceſſion?

3. What were the important events concerning each?

4. What connection had they with each other?

He having thus a tolerable view of the outlines of Univerſal Hiſtory, I intend that he ſhall cultivate an acquaintance with the following ones in order:—1. The Hiſtory of the Jews. 2. Of the Babylonians. 3. The Perſians. 4. The Grecians. 5. The Romans. 6. The decline of the Roman Empire. 7. The riſe and Hiſtory of Modern Europe. 8. The Mahometan, Perſian, Chineſe, and Mogul Empires. 9. America. 10. Eaſt Indies. 11. South-Sea Iſlands. At firſt, I purpoſe very ſhort abſtracts of each to be made, 2. That he ſhall carefully go twice or thrice through a Geographical Grammar. 3. Afterwards peruſe larger Works. 4. Intermix his reading with Voyages and Travels.

I can with pleaſure ſay, that this plan gradually improved his mind, ſo that at the age of thirteen, he had not only a good foundation laid for reading, but ſome tolerable acquaintance with the moſt important events which had taken place in the hiſtory of mankind, in the various ages of the world, and ſome knowledge of the moſt diſtinguiſhed characters.

Biography, was a natural conſequence of reading hiſtory. To encourage him in this, he was furniſhed with the moſt uſeful lives I could meet with, both of religious characters and others,—ſuch as the lives of Warriors and Adven-

Adventurers; of Stateſmen, as well as of Miſſionaries and Philanthropiſts. Hence a Biographical Dictionary formed a part of his little library. At the ſame time he was encouraged to read the account of almoſt every public perſon he met with in books.

On the ſubjects of Geography and Chronology, I have little to obſerve more, than the method uſed for his inſtruction in them, which was, in GEOGRAPHY, 1. To commit to memory the terms uſed, with their explanation. 2. The names of the principal cities in the known world, with their number of inhabitants, and profeſſion of religion. 3. To ſhew him on a terreſtrial globe, the latitudes, longitudes, climates, &c. 4. To colour the maps in his geographical Grammar. 5. Frequently to trace the boundaries of each country on the globe. 6. Occaſionally to give a curſory review of the whole globe, beginning at ſome part Weſt, and keeping as near as poſſible a ſtraight courſe Eaſtward; and to name the chief cities round the whole globe: Alſo, beginning at the North Pole, to proceed in the ſame manner Southward, till he returned to the North Pole. By various exerciſes of this ſort, moſt of the face of the globe became familiar to him.

The method taken to inſtruct him in CHRONOLOGY, was very ſhort, viz. 1. To draw a liſt of the events in each century, from his ſketch of univerſal hiſtory. 2. To draw a ſimilar one of the perſons beſt known in each. 3. To furniſh him with a good Chronological Table of events for his own library.

It may now be proper to annex a plan of the time ſpent for theſe purpoſes, which was continued nearly the ſame, whether they attended ſchool or not. 1. The forenoon, was divided between Latin and Hiſtory. The afternoon, was ſpent in Hiſtory and Engliſh Grammar. The evening, in Arithmetic. 2. The forenoon, in Latin and Geography. The afternoon, in Biography, Chronology, and Miſcellanies. The evening, in Writing.

You will recollect, that the opportunity for reviewing the progreſs my ſons made was before breakfaſt: By taking the ſubjects alternately, and referring to written remarks, a ſtrict attention was paid to every part. It may be ſuppoſed, that too much application was required from the children; but it is to be obſerved, that care to uſe their time properly, was very early inculcated; and that, by a variation of employ, they were ſeldom fatigued: At the ſame time, great care was taken not to confine them too long at one time, but to allow them ſufficient intervals of relaxation. By reſerving one day in the week for general repetition and examination, inſtead of their being employed in getting additional leſſons, —they underſtood and retained much of what they learned.

I am, dear Sir, your's, &c.

LETTER XIII.

Dear Sir,

HAVING in the preceeding Letters, collected moſt of the remarks I had preſerved on the ſubject of Education; I ſhall only trouble you with the Copy of a Letter written

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to my Son, when he was removed from me to a public ſchool, at the age of eleven years.

" My dear Boy, your happineſs is of ſo much moment to me, that beſides my fervant prayers for you, and the inſtructions I have often repeated, I now ſit down to give you in writing ſome directions, which I hope you will preſerve, and frequently peruſe. They relate to your Learning at School;—the Application of your leiſure time;—matters of a religious Nature;—your Conduct towards all you are now connected with;—and laſtly, Remarks on any ſubject that occurs. I ſhall be thus particular, becauſe I expect you will frequently have recourſe to this letter; and if I have not included every thing neceſſary, you will write to me, and aſk any queſtions you wiſh to have anſwered.

To begin with your Learning at School. I expect I have not occaſion to ſay much on this head, as you will naturally riſe in the ſchool, in proportion to your improvement. Mr. T**** aſked me yeſterday, if I wiſhed you to learn the Latin? My reply was, that I wiſhed him to try what you were capable of, and then give me his opinion. Now if you prefer ſloth and ignorance, to induſtry and knowledge, he will naturally recommend to me, not to be at the expence of a claſſical education for you; and a few months negligence *now*, may deprive you for life, of that advantage. I am no more a friend to unneceſſary earning, than to unneceſſary clothing or furniture; but you may recollect, that when Capt. Cook ſailed for his voyage round the world, he took in an immenſe quantity of ſtores, beſides

beſides what were really neceſſary for victualling his ſhip; one reaſon for which was, that he wiſhed to be uſeful to the countries he might viſit, and ſcarcely knew what would do moſt good. You are juſt preparing for a dangerous voyage;—you are now entering into a ſtate, in which (thro' the divine bleſſing) you may not only get ſtores to ſerve your own paſſage, but which may fit you for general uſefulneſs. To ſtimulate you to this, I wiſh you to read the lives of Lord Kaims, and the Duke of Sully, and notice the manner in which they ſpent their time, as it was owing, in a conſiderable degree, to their application, that they became ſo uſeful to their fellow-creatures. Never forget, that induſtry, humility, and prayer, render us, in general, fit inſtruments for the Lord's uſe, either in the affairs of this, or a better world.

It is impoſſible to determine what may be your future ſituation; but that merciful Hand, which hath hitherto been over you, will, I truſt, direct and preſerve you thro' life. I covet nothing great for you: My higheſt wiſh and prayer is, that you may be *holy*, *happy*, and *uſeful;* and that if your father ſhould not be able to leave you a ſhilling, you may be fitted to adorn the loweſt ſituation in life; remembering you bear the Name of him, who "had not where to lay his head." I write thus, becauſe, I never would have my children to value themſelves as deſcending from a perſon of fortune, or expect to go thro' life, like thoſe who are called the "ſons of gentlemen." Be outdone by none, in acts of compaſſion to the poor, in courteous, polite, and manly behaviour towards all. But all

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the aſſuming and extravagant conduct of "the followers of Lord Bottom," I expect you will pity and avoid, as diſcovering a want, both of underſtanding and piety. I have been inſenſibly led to theſe reflections while treating of your learning. Yet it would be a matter of ſolid joy to me, to learn from Mr. T****, that ſuch is your intenſe deſire of improvement; your cloſe application;—the correctneſs with which you commit every thing neceſſary to memory;—the pains you take to underſtand your inſtructions; the true judgment you form of what you learn; and the manly, yet modeſt manner in which you expreſs yourſelf, when aſked a queſtion, that he is thereby induced ſtrongly to recommend me to give you the beſt education in my power.

You will obſerve, I wiſh you to proceed as diligently as poſſible, in Latin, French, Writing, Arithmetic, and Geography. I ſuppoſe theſe will fill up your time from the hour of riſing till five each evening. In theſe I adviſe you, not merely to get your exerciſes by heart, but as you go along, aſk yourſelf," "Do I underſtand this?" If not, reflect upon it till you do; or, if you cannot, make an entry in a book for the purpoſe, ſuppoſe it to be in your Latin, remark as follows, "Feb. 8th. this day the following "paſſage was in my exerciſe, (here write the paſ- "ſage,) which I do not properly underſtand." When you have made this remark, leave ſo much blank-paper as will enable you to write the explanation underneath it.—Do the ſame in every important difficulty that occurs to you in whatever you are learning; beſtow your leiſure time in ſearching out the ſolution of theſe difficulties, and your

maſter will ſoon ſee your improvement. Speak French with your companions as frequently as you can. Be correct in your writing and arithmetic. I have now mentioned what occurred to me on your learning at ſchool; but I wiſh to be more particular with reſpect to the improvement of your leiſure time; as that will greatly depend upon your own induſtry. I take it for granted that you have nearly as follows: Each day from twelve till two, and from five till eight: That is, five hours each day for four days, is twenty hours: To which you may add Thurſday afternoon five more, and Saturday eight hours; which added together, will be thirty-three hours each week. Now I deduct two hours each day for victuals and exerciſe, or twelve in a week, there will then remain about twenty-one hours in a week, beſides leiſure for exerciſe, which ſhould do wonders. But admitting this is over-rated, and that you have only two hours per diem, or twelve hours in a week, entirely at command, of what uſe may not theſe be? I do ſeriouſly ſay, you ought to employ twelve hours in a week in other labours, beſides thoſe of your ſchool, and yet you will have abundance of time for proper exerciſe: But I ſhall be able to judge whether improvement, or play, has moſt influence.

That you may improve by what you read, I would have you, 1ſt. Preſerve what you have already learned. 2. Read ſuch books as are moſt likely to be uſeful.

In order to aſſiſt you in preſerving what you have learned, I will ſend you blank books for the following purpoſes:

No. I. For difficulties you meet with in your learning, agreeable to the preceeding obſervations.

No. II.

No. II. To preſerve Remarks on any ſubject not of a religious nature, ſuch as Anecdotes, Hiſtory, Biography, or Poetry.

No. III. To preſerve Remarks on religious ſubjects, ſuch as ſermons you may hear, books you read, difficult paſſages of ſcripture, or any thing which relates to religious inſtruction.

No. IV. I would have you uſe as a kind of Diary, or Journal, to which no one may have acceſs but yourſelf: If you only write in this once a week, it will be uſeful to preſerve every thing which particularly affects your mind, eſpecially of a religious nature.

No. V. You may uſe for the preſerving copies of any Letters you receive, that you think valuable.

I would not have you fill theſe blank books too ſoon. The method I adviſe is this: Suppoſe you ſhould employ one hour each evening in reading, and to begin for inſtance, with the Hiſtory of America; while you are reading, you obſerve ſome paſſage which you think deſerves notice, but you have not leiſure at that time to do more than make a memorandum in your pocket book of the page: But another evening you may be more diſpoſed to write than read;— you review your memorandums, and perhaps, out of ten places you have marked, on a review, you find ſome too long, ſome not important, ſome too difficult, and out of ten, you only copy one or two: By this mean, the work of extracting will be a pleaſure. But if you attempt to write at the time you read, you will find it impracticable.

Do not be diſcouraged at finding difficulties in making extracts. Sometimes the contents of a book, or the title, or the remarks on the margin, will be all you can do. But at any rate, let no week paſs without adding ſomething to your remarks, if it be only *ſix* lines; tho' I certainly wiſh you not to oppreſs yourſelf.

Whatever book you read, conſider its general deſign, and inſert it in your manuſcripts. Go thro' it if you can; and if you make no extracts, yet remark that you have read it, and if you can, inſert what you think of it.

I come now to things of a religious nature, which I ſhall conſider under two general heads: 1ſt. The manner of ſpending the ſabbath. 2d. The gaining of a religious temper. I have now, my dear boy, with greater ſolemnity than ever, to charge you to keep holy the Sabbath-Day. Hence you muſt avoid even thoſe words which are lawful on another day. When, therefore, you find your companions entering into converſation about temporal affairs on the Lord's-day, 1ſt. Lift up your heart in prayer to God, to preſerve you. 2d. Withdraw as ſoon as poſſible. If ever you ſhould have a pleaſure in fooliſh converſation on that day, it will deſtroy all your ſerious impreſſions. I would recommend you to employ your Sabbath evenings alone, in your own room; where, beſides the peruſal of the Scriptures, and the religious writings you have with you, it will be very proper to write in your diary, eſpecially thoſe ſubjects which impreſs your mind; as it will help to preſerve religious impreſſions, and enable you to expreſs yourſelf with eaſe upon them.

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But you never will continue to ſpend your time thus, if you are an entire ſtranger to a *religious Temper*. This God alone can give you, and he certainly will, if you aſk it, becauſe he hath promiſed it.

By a religious temper, I mean, ſuch a ſenſe of *inviſible and eternal things*, as will influence and govern your deſires, hopes, fears, joys, and ſorrows. This will give you pleaſure in religious employments. Thro' the preventing grace of God, I truſt you already know theſe things, in ſome little meaſure; eſpecially when hearing affecting ſermons, or reading pious books; and this makes me lay ſo much ſtreſs on the due employment of the Sabbath, becauſe I am very apprehenſive that having ſo few helps, and ſo many hindrances, if you do not carefully improve theſe ſacred hours, your good deſires will vaniſh away.

I have great hopes, that if you give yourſelf to prayer, reading, and meditation, on that day, God, of his great mercy, will himſelf be your teacher and preſerver.

My dear boy, it is on your ſoul's account that I ſo earneſtly entreat you to flee to your cloſet, to ſpeak to God as your Father;—ſearch his word, and he will not "break a bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoking flax."

With reſpect to your conduct to all around you. Do not forget, "You are to follow no man, farther than he follows Chriſt." 2d. Remember who has ſaid,—"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be that go in thereat; ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few

few there be that find it." Therefore we may not follow the multitude to do evil.

2. *Be the Friend of All.* More eſpecially, be all attention and reſpect to your Maſters. To the Poor, particularly the aged Poor, ſhew the utmoſt tenderneſs. Before your ſuperiors, diſcover at once modeſty and firmneſs. Avoid diſputes and quarrels with your ſchool-fellows, and conciliate their affections, when you can do it with a good conſcience.

I have now, my dear boy, written you a very long letter, and it is probable that you may ſuppoſe I have ſet you a great deal of work: But the whole may be reduced to two or three points, viz. 1ſt. *Be diligent.* 2d. Always have ſome certain work at hand. 3d. Purſue that work in *proper* ORDER. That God may abundantly bleſs the inſtructions you receive, is the conſtant prayer of your affectionate *FATHER.*

FINIS.

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